

KTOERLEN-
WACHTE^THEMANOFAGADIR 137

slightly misleading notion of its character. Pourtales, the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, always contended that it was a friendly *demarche* in the interest of all parties concerned. Iswolsky, on the other hand, described it at the time to Nicolson as a diplomatic ultimatum. It was assuredly a bitter humiliation for such a vain man to drink the cup of failure to the dregs, yet it was a secret relief when the menace of war and exposure was removed. Six months later, when the smart had begun to heal, he confessed to Cartwright, the British Ambassador at Vienna, that Germany had acted in a friendly spirit, and had merely declared that if war broke out between Austria and Russia she would have to stand by her ally.

Kiderlen always spoke with satisfaction of his share in bringing the Bosnian crisis to an end without a breach of the peace. "I knew the Russians were not ready for war," he confided to Take Jonescu, "and I wished to profit by their disability. I wanted to show that the time of German tutelage, which dated from 1815, was gone for ever. Schoen and Co. would never have dared what I undertook on my sole responsibility.* He exaggerated his share in the transaction, for without Billow's approval the high explosive would not have left Berlin. His old friend Holstein, with one foot in the grave, sent him congratulations on his "cheek.*" Biilow, whose days were numbered, was glad to have had assistance on the bridge during a perilous voyage, and even Marschall, who never liked him, declared that he was Schoen's only possible successor in the Wilhelmstrasse. Despite these compliments Germany was to learn that such forced surrenders leave ugly scars.

The Foreign Minister returned to work at the close of the Bosnian crisis and Kiderlen resumed his task

at'Bucharest.

Yet this time there were laurels on his brow. He had played an active part on a big and brilliantly lighted stage to the accompaniment of general applause. After the nerveless sway of Schoen the Wilhelmstrasse had been glad to feel a strong hand at the helm. Billow's star was sinking below the horizon, for his handling of the *Daily Telegraph* incident had determined the Kaiser to get rid of him at the first favourable opportunity.

Perhaps the next Chancellor might be able to remove the veto which alone stood between Kiderlen and the seat of power.

When Bethmann Hollweg succeeded Billow in June, 1909, an urgent message was despatched from the Wilhelmstrasse to Bucharest. "The new Chief is extremely anxious to meet